DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 422 111 PS 026 816

AUTHOR Weiss, Heather; Dirks, Jane; Friedman, Kim; Hanley, Gisella; Kreider, Holly; Levine, Eliot; Mayer, Ellen; McAllister, Carol; Vaughan, Peggy; Wellenkamp, Jane

TITLE A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Family-School Communication.

PUB DATE 1998-07-00
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Communication Problems; Communication Research; Elementary Education; *Ethnography; *Family School Relationship; Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Teacher Conferences; Parent Teacher Cooperation; Participant Observation; *Qualitative Research; Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS Multiple Measures Approach; School Based Support Teams; Vignettes

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the initial findings from an ethnographic case study, focusing on the mixed-method research strategy used in the MacArthur Comprehensive Child Development Project Follow-up Study. The aim of the study was to expand the understanding of children's developmental trajectories as they traverse the elementary school years. Approximately 400 children, their families, schools, and communities are participating in a longitudinal study from kindergarten through third grade. Twenty-three children were selected from the larger sample for ethnographic case studies, involving in-depth interviews with teachers, other school personnel, parents or caregivers, and the children themselves; and participant observations in schools and classrooms. This paper presents three case study vignettes of children in the second grade, each highlighting a different aspect of family-school communication from the perspective of the children's parents, and highlights the methodological strengths of ethnography. The paper notes that participant observation revealed factors related to the effectiveness of parent-teacher conferences in supporting children's learning. An ethnographic interview revealed one' parent's construction of a school's attempts to address her child's behavior problems. The third vignette uncovered the complexity and contradictions and race, racism, and informal communication between home and child for one African-American child. (KB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

PS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 422 111

A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Family-School Communication

Heather Weiss
Jane Dirks, Kim Friedman, Gisella Hanley
Holly Kreider, Eliot Levine, Ellen Mayer
Carol McAllister, Peggy Vaughan, Jane Wellenkamp

July 1998

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Holly Kreider

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

For additional copies of this manuscript, please contact the Harvard Family Research Project publication department at (617) 496-4304.

PS 026816

A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Family-School Communication

Heather Weiss, Jane Dirks, Kim Friedman, Gisella Hanley, Holly Kreider,
Eliot Levine, Ellen Mayer, Carol McAllister, Peggy Vaughan, Jane Wellenkamp[1]

Child development researchers are increasingly recognizing the value of mixed method approaches for capitalizing on the strengths of diverse frameworks for social inquiry. By thoughtfully integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, for example, we can transcend paradigmatic boundaries and generate complementary and mutually informative sources of knowledge (Greene & Caracelli, 1997).

In this paper, we describe the mixed-method strategy we adopted in the MacArthur Comprehensive Child Development Project (CCDP) Follow-up Study, focusing on the contribution of ethnographic inquiry to the overall research process. The aim of the study is to expand our understanding of children's developmental trajectories as they traverse the elementary school years. This is being accomplished through research with approximately 400 children, their families, schools, and communities. The study follows these children from kindergarten through the third grade, relying on a variety of quantitative measures, including teacher and principal questionnaires, structured parent interviews, and child assessments.

Twenty-three children were selected from the larger study sample for ethnographic case studies. Using ethnographic methods, the case study component has focused on cultural patterns within and across social settings, specifically schools and families, which illuminate social processes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The ethnographic work has employed in-depth interviewing with the teachers, other school personnel, parents or other primary caregivers, and children themselves, as well as participant observations in schools and classrooms, allowing ethnographers to create "thick" descriptions of social interactions and environments and actors' perspectives (Geertz, 1973). Fieldnotes, memos and analytic writings inform ethnographers' interpretations and analyses of data from multiple informants.

As an illustration of our mixed method approach, this paper presents some of our initial findings regarding the role of family-school communication in shaping children's developmental trajectories. Substantial research points to the potential benefit of family involvement in education on children's development and academic performance (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Effective family-school communication is an essential component of many family involvement activities (Epstein, 1995) and is thus of interest to our inquiry.

---

[1] Second authors contributed equally to this paper and have been listed alphabetically.

Our discussion centers around three case study vignettes of children in the second grade.[2] Each vignette highlights a different aspect of family-school communication, primarily from the perspective of these children's parents. Most importantly, the vignettes provide examples of how ethnographic inquiry has deepened our understanding and added complexity to our prior conceptions of family-school communication as initially reflected in our quantitative work. This knowledge has then been used to inform the development of subsequent quantitative measures in ways that move our inquiry beyond traditional categories of home-school communication. The findings from our mixed method approach also have implications for policy.

I. Parent-teacher conferences: Helping parents help their children

Beginning with quantitative findings. Our analysis began with an examination of the quantitative data on family-school communication. In the first year of our study, findings showed that 84% of parents reported that they had taken part in at least one parent-teacher conference. In and of itself, this finding might suggest that there is a great deal of positive communication between home and school, which presumably supports children's positive trajectories through school.

The contribution of ethnography. Our ethnographic work, however, alters our interpretation of this finding and suggests that contextual factors may influence the extent to which constructive communication occurs during conferences. Ethnography, which makes use of participant observation (Spradley, 1980), can capture a parent-teacher conference as it is occurring and provide a different view than would be derived from a self-reported survey. Second, ethnography concerns itself with the culture and context of social environments (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), a perspective which can be more difficult to access using quantitative measures.

In the following vignette, these ethnographic strategies highlight one mother's experience of a parent-teacher conference, and to uncover contextual factors that can contribute to the effectiveness of conferences as vehicles for increasing parent-teacher collaboration around homework and learning. This vignette, in particular, draws from an ethnographer's participant observation of a parent-teacher conference, and is thus written in the ethnographer's voice.[3]

Vignette I. According to his teacher, Johnny is a well-liked child with many friends, good behavior in school, and below-grade level performance in math, reading, and writing. I joined Johnny and Diane, his mother, in Johnny's classroom for a parent-teacher conference. Johnny's teacher, Ms. Jones, told us to sit at Johnny's desk. When we sat down, Johnny excitedly showed us his work. Ms. Jones joined us after chatting

[2] Names and other identifying information have been changed in the vignettes to protect participants' confidentiality.

[3] While the other two vignettes also represent ethnographers' analyses, they rely more on ethnographic interviews and are written in the third person.

briefly with another parent who decided to wait in the classroom. Ms. Jones spent the next 30 minutes reviewing Johnny's math and language work, explaining to Diane how she should help Johnny at home. Ms. Jones went through the work very quickly. She did not pause to see if Diane understood her explanations or to ask if she had questions. There were many complicated concepts to explain (especially the math concepts), and I could see that Diane was having a hard time understanding. At one point, Diane looked at a particular math question Johnny had done and said to me, "Look, Johnny got this wrong." In fact, Johnny had been correct, but Diane had not understood the exercise.

Ms. Jones also showed Diane the specific areas in which Johnny was having trouble, such as spelling. Diane seemed more and more worried as she realized the difficulties Johnny was having. She kept saying, "All I see is that Johnny is doing badly."

When the teacher had gone over all the worksheets, she gave Johnny's report card to Diane. By this time Johnny was exhausted, and even Diane was not paying much attention. There was a series of 15-20 items, each corresponding to an academic or behavioral skill. Mrs. Jones explained that each item was evaluated as unsatisfactory, satisfactory or excellent. There was also a space for the teacher's written comments, but Ms. Jones had not written anything.

The report card was very difficult to read; the language used was technical, and the print was small. Even I had difficulty trying to figure out the specific areas in which Johnny needed to improve. Ms. Jones did not go through each item with Diane or summarize the information on the report card. She thought that Diane could read it in her own time.

Diane looked at the report card and immediately noticed that the majority of check marks were in the unsatisfactory or "below-grade level" column. She turned to me and said, "Oh no, I see that he's not doing well. It's that he rushes through his homework so that he can go out to play and look [showing me some of Johnny's work] he doesn't take care of his handwriting." Johnny then asked me, "What does 'unsatisfactory' mean?"

Identifying dimensions of home-school communication. Our analysis of this event highlights several aspects of a parent-teacher conference that can influence its effectiveness, including communication styles, relative emphasis on strengths or deficits, and the public or private nature of communication.

First, the teacher's style of communication--specifically her lack of invitingness, sensitivity and helpfulness--did not maximize the opportunity for communication that supported Johnny's learning. Despite her awareness of Diane's limited educational background, the teacher seemed more interested in finishing the conference quickly than with providing clear explanations or suggestions, perhaps due to her busy schedule of conferences that day. She also introduced many new concepts and left no time for questions. Second, the teacher emphasized Johnny's difficulties and excluded a discussion of his strengths, but seemed unaware of or unconcerned by how this might affect Diane or Johnny. In fact, from the ethnographer's viewpoint, this emphasis appeared to cause confusion for Johnny and stress for his mother. Third, throughout the

conference another parent was present in the room. This lack of privacy could help explain Diane's hesitancy in asking questions. Lastly, the complex nature of the report card limited Diane's ability to learn how Johnny was doing at school.

From the viewpoint of the ethnographer, these factors reflect missed opportunities for the teacher to provide Diane with ideas for supporting her son's learning at home. Instead, the outcomes of the conference for Johnny's mother appear to be anxiety, exhaustion, and misunderstanding.

Informing future data collection. While this observation generates new dimensions of communication, it is just about this one example, and is specific to this one context. In a mixed method approach, ethnographic findings lead to new questions for future quantitative methods to pursue, questions about how these communication factors apply to a broader population and across different contexts. For example, questions to pursue with the larger sample might be: How many other parents experience their parent-teacher conferences as exhausting and discouraging? What is the relationship between these conferences and other key dimensions of home-school communication?

II. Parent as "partner"? Parent involvement in school-based team meetings

Beginning with quantitative findings. Like conferences, school-based team meetings that address individual children's problems provide opportunities for collaboration between families and schools. However, our quantitative data suggest that schools sometimes neglect to involve parents in the process of addressing students' problems at school. In the first year of the study, for example, five families within the larger study sample reported that no one had spoken to them about their children having learning or behavior problems, yet each of these children's teachers reported that the children had received supplemental Title I services to assist with reading and math problems. This finding suggests some level of disconnection between schools and parents of students with learning difficulties, which could be due to numerous factors such as misunderstanding, alienation, or insufficient communication.

The contribution of ethnography. Beginning to comprehend these dimensions is facilitated by a deeper look at specific instances. The second vignette examines a school meeting and illustrates the importance of maintaining personal communication between school and home, treating parents as partners in the problem-solving process, and attending to parents' interpretations of school interventions. Ethnography is a particularly well-suited method for exploring the construction of meaning. It is a method that immerses researchers in a cultural context, with an intensity and long-term involvement that can help build rapport between an ethnographer and his or her participants and increase ethnographers' understanding of the meaning that participants attach to life events (Wolcott, 1995).

Vignette II. Jason has struggled with behavioral and anger-management problems since the age of three. While capable of doing good work in school, these problems often undermine Jason's ability to learn and demonstrate use of new skills. In response to

Jason's difficulties, his mother, Sarah, has encouraged Jason to use his words more and has enrolled him in counseling. She also makes a concerted effort to stay in touch with Jason's teachers. School personnel whom the ethnographer has interviewed find Sarah accessible, open, and cooperative.

Because of her close connection to the school and Jason's teachers, Sarah was shocked when the school called a meeting to discuss Jason's problematic behavior, but from her perspective, made little effort to include her. "I was not aware of all this [the school's concerns] goin' on until they called this big meeting," recalled Sarah. She received a note in the mail asking her to call about setting up a meeting time, but felt that this note did not reflect the urgency that the school intended. Sarah admitted later that she had not found an opportunity to call. When she heard nothing more from the school, she finally called Jim, a friend who runs an agency that provides social services to the family. He had been asked by the school to attend the meeting which had been scheduled.

According to Sarah's account, Jim was very surprised to learn from Sarah that no one had called her about the meeting. Initially, Sarah felt that she had been intentionally left out of the meeting, but later decided it was probably an oversight: "...Too many people involved, too many people thinkin' somebody else is gonna do it, and nobody did it."

Despite the short notice, Sarah was able to attend the meeting, which she described as "very, very intense." She sat at a large table with six professionals, including Jim. If Jim had not attended the meeting, Sarah said that she would have felt like it was "them against me." One service provider at the meeting recommended removing Jason temporarily from the home and placing him in a residential school, a suggestion that Sarah found particularly upsetting.

Exploring a parent's construction of meaning. The meaning that Sarah makes of the team meeting and the process surrounding it has implications for the quality of the communication that occurs. Specifically, Sarah felt she never had a chance during the meeting to explain the incident that had precipitated the meeting, in which Jason had allegedly given his sister a black eye. Nor did she feel comfortable sharing her feelings about not having been notified of the day and time of the meeting. When asked what held her back, Sarah explained "I felt like...I was at a board meeting with all these people looking at me as a parent, and it's almost like I had failed...as a parent...I don't look at myself as being a professional person. I don't look at myself as being like highly intelligent. And here, these people have gone through four, five, six, seven, eight years of college, and who am I to sit in here and tell them that I think I know my son better than you...?"

Similar to the mother in the first vignette, Sarah is a parent with limited educational background who felt disempowered by the process of communication with the school. Two earlier unresolved issues also may have added to Sarah's negative experience of the meeting. First, Sarah already felt that the school had failed to honor her request in assessing Jason's problems. She had requested a psychological evaluation of Jason, yet

the school refused. "Now you're telling me I have a very, very violent child, but you don't want a pysch. eval. done?"

Second, Sarah and school personnel seem to define children's inappropriate behavior, and the appropriate adult responses to it, differently. Compared to school personnel, Sarah seems much less concerned about Jason's behavior. She tends to focus more on Jason's loving side and remains confident that he will not harm anyone physically; others worry that Jason might hurt a fellow student or a sibling. She explains, "You're talking about an eight-year old child that has been abused, that has seen…extremely verbal, loud verbal fights. This is the only way he knows to release his anger…And yes, I'm working to change that, but you can't change it overnight."

It is difficult to say at this point how, if at all, Sarah's negative feeling about the school's handling of the meeting will influence Jason's pathway through school. These sorts of incidents might bolster parents' resolve to go outside the school system to secure services for their children, which could distance children and families from schools and further reduce home-school communication. Furthermore, such meetings may leave parents with a sense that the school disapproves of their parenting practices, further discouraging parents, particularly those who already struggle with low self-esteem, from future collaboration with school personnel.

Informing future data collection. This case and others highlight parents' experiences of home-school communication and raise questions about convergent and divergent perspectives across families and schools. To explore these multiple perspectives both quantitatively and qualitatively, we developed two additional measures (i.e., surveys and interview protocols) in which we ask parallel questions of parents, teachers and principals.

III. Informal communication: Listening for silences

Beginning with quantitative findings. Our quantitative results indicate that informal conversations between parents and teachers are the most frequent form of home-school communication. Teachers reported engaging in informal meetings at the beginning or end of the school day at least monthly with about half (52%) of the study families, and at least weekly with about a third (37%) of the families.

The contribution of ethnography. The frequency of informal communications between families and teachers suggests that it is a phenomenon worth exploring further to identify important dimensions that might improve child outcomes. The third vignette shows how ethnography can explore complex social dynamics of individual relationships, specifically informal communication, and nest it in larger social systems, such as neighborhoods and broader society. In particular, this case example portrays how informal communication between a parent and teacher, although perceived by both as mutually positive and constructive, nevertheless ignored key social dynamics involving race, class and social mobility.

Vignette III. Martin is an eight-year-old African American boy who lives with his

mother, Shareen, and her fiancé in a small town within an old industrial urban center. While attending kindergarten, Martin and his family lived in a public housing development that housed both African American and white families. Martin did exceptionally well in kindergarten, both academically and socially. At the end of kindergarten, Martin and his family moved out of the housing development and into a mostly white working class neighborhood. In an ethnographic interview, Shareen describes how this fulfilled her longtime dream to own her own home and to leave public housing. However, it caused two major stresses for Martin. First, several of his new neighbors, both adults and children, subjected him to frequent and severe racism, including name calling and social ostracism. Second, Martin lost his former neighborhood friends, primarily Black children, who now sometimes taunt Martin as "too good for them."

In first grade, Martin continued to out-perform most of the other students academically. At the same time, he began to "act out" in the classroom, which resulted in his teacher frequently contacting his mother. Both Shareen and Martin's teacher believed his association with one of his former neighborhood friends was the primary source of his difficulties in first grade. They actively collaborated to resolve this problem by separating the two boys and emphasizing to Martin the need for greater self-control.

The degree of collaboration between Martin's mother and teacher is notable. Shareen did not attend a single parent-teacher conference, but she spoke frequently with the teacher by telephone, and her fiancé sometimes visited the classroom during school hours to check on Martin's progress. Telephone conversations between Shareen and Martin's teacher proved to be an especially effective form of communication, leading to a collaborative intervention for addressing what his teacher defined as disruptive behavior. When Martin "acted out," his teacher would call his mother at work. Shareen would then speak with Martin on the phone, and this enabled Martin to "settle down" and comply with expected classroom behavior. Martin's anticipation of such phone contact also seemed to prevent some of his disruptive behavior. Such a deterrent function was also served by Shareen's grandmother who worked at the school and kept her eye on Martin. Shareen explains: "But see, this time, my grandmother, she works at the school. . . and she uh, requested this teacher she knows. I said, 'You better watch it, 'cause Nanna will be on you.'" This pattern of home-school communication was uniquely facilitated by Shareen's initiative and availability during work hours, the teacher's flexibility and dedication, and the family and school resources that permitted unscheduled phone communication. This type of respectful, bi-directional, and consistent communication pattern appeared to afford an effective collaboration.

While Martin's mother and teacher collaborated to address his problems, they did not fully communicate with each other regarding their differing perspectives on the source or context of these problems. Shareen viewed her son's anger and defiance as stemming, at least in part, from their recent move from public housing to a more affluent white neighborhood, resulting in Martin becoming a target of racism. Shareen actively challenged the racist behavior of her white neighbors while also reinforcing the self-esteem and pride of her son: "It was rough for awhile. He was really upset. But I would

still like to talk to him and tell him, 'that's just their ignorance, and their parents, and there's really nothing we can do about it. That's just the way they think. That's their problem.'" Yet she appears not have talked about this aspect of Martin's life with his teacher, a white woman. In terms of Martin's former neighborhood friends, Shareen told our ethnographers she considered them a "bad influence" on him, and indicated that one of the reasons the family had moved was to get Martin away from such influences. Unlike her keen awareness of the impact of white racism on her son, Shareen appeared to lack an adequate understanding of the meaning of this loss for Martin.

Martin's teacher, in turn, appeared to be unaware of most of this context--namely Martin's recent move out of public housing, the racism of his new neighbors, and his loss of friends. She commented that many African American boys in the school were quick to anger and to raise their fists at any perceived offense. Martin's teacher attributed this to "the environment in which these children live" and their need to defend themselves from its dangers. The dangers she perceived were the street life of public housing -- not the racism of white homeowners or the social alienation accompanying social mobility. In sum, Martin's teacher seemed to lack a contextualized understanding of Martin's behavior. Despite the teacher's high regard for Martin and his family, communication between teacher and family did not address the influences of racism and class-based antagonism on his behavior.

Uncovering complexities and silences. This case example presents two surprising findings. The first is that parent and teacher were able to make some progress in helping Martin in school despite the lack of discussion of contextual issues. Second is that issues of race and class remain hidden and unexpressed even when teacher and parents work collaboratively and are in close personal contact. A general finding of our research is the relative lack of communication about such matters either among school personnel or between school personnel and parents. Despite the many hours of observations and conversations we have carried out in the schools, we have not recorded one clear instance where issues of race or class have been explicitly discussed among school personnel or between home and school. It is difficult to determine at this stage in our research how such silences influence the trajectories of individual children such as Martin. In this case, mother and teacher were able to communicate and collaborate to help Martin handle his immediate behavior problems. But given the importance of contextual understanding in effective problem-solving, as well as the centrality of racism and class difference in Martin and other children's lives, we are concerned that such silences could become a major obstacle to these children's successful pathways through middle childhood.

Informing future quantitative work. We were able to use some of the basic ethnographic findings about racism to pose brief closed-ended questions for the larger study sample. Specifically, we asked parents about their and their children's experiences of discrimination based on their race, income level, ethnicity and language. We also realized that some of the issues about race and racism could not be easily converted into a quantitative inquiry. This was due in part to the complex and nuanced nature of the issues and to participants' potential reluctance to discuss such delicate topics unless in the context of a deeper relationship with the interviewer--a context more easily provided

through an ethnographic approach.

Conclusion

The implications of our work are twofold. First, the thoughtful mixing of ethnography and a quantitative approach can deepen current conceptions of education issues. As the discussion has illustrated, our mixed method approach used ethnographic discoveries to guide the development and revision of our quantitative measures and provide a richer understanding of home-school communication.

As highlighted by the vignettes, ethnography has brought particular methodological strengths to our analysis. The three vignettes highlight a few of these strengths. In the first vignette, participant observation revealed factors related to the effectiveness of conferences in supporting children's learning. In the second vignette, an ethnographic interview revealed one parent's construction of a school's attempts to address her child's behavior problems. And the third vignette uncovered the complexity and contradictions of race, racism, and informal communication between home and school for one African American child.

The home-school communication theme we explored in this initial mixed method analysis also suggests lessons for educational practice and policy. We have learned of the prevalence of parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences and caught glimpses of the underutilized potential of conferences. Especially in a time when the political climate is supporting attendance at conferences, fostering conditions that optimize these opportunities for constructive home-school communication is essential.[4]

We have learned of schools' attempts to address children's academic and behavior problems without fully engaging parents in this process, and of the potentially intimidating and alienating effect this may have on parents. A next step in our research will be to explore the perspectives of teachers and school personnel, to discover their view of home-school communication and the challenges they identify in communicating with parents.

Our mixed method work also suggests that informal patterns of family-school communication are frequent and can be capitalized on to promote children's successful pathways through elementary school. The work also suggests that families and schools must learn to talk openly about the multiple contexts of children's lives, including their experiences of race and racism, if they are to understand and increase children's opportunities for success.

---

[4] A proposed expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act may permit time off for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences (State of the Union Address, 1997), a suggestion which many employers have already adopted (Family Involvement Partnership for Learning website, 1997).

Acknowledgements

This work has been supported by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Pathways through Middle Childhood. We would also like to thank the Steering Committee for the CCDP Follow-up Study, Deborah Stipek, Walter Secada, Penny Hauser-Cram, Jennifer Greene and Jacque Eccles, for their feedback throughout our data collection and analysis. We would especially like to thank Jennifer Greene for her guidance on our mixed method analysis. We are grateful to Jenny Stadler for her earlier work on the study and the presentation proposal. We also thank Manisha Shetty and Maura Pelham for their research and administrative assistance. Lastly, we thank our project families and school personnel who gave so generously of their time to share their stories with us.

References

Epstein, J. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. Phi Delta Kappan, 76 (5), 701-712.

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning (no date). How Your Business Can Support Family Involvement in Education—and Benefit [online]. Available: HYPERLINK http://www.ed.gov/PFIE/business.html [1998, June 23].

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays.* New York: Basic Books.

Greene, J.C. & Caracelli, V.J. (Eds.) (1997). Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges and benefits of integrating diverse paradigms. New Directions for Evaluation, No. 74. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P.(1995). Ethnography: Principles in practice. New York: Routledge.

Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

LeCompte, M. & Preissle, J. (1993). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. San Diego: Academic Press.

Spradley, J.S. (1980). Participant observation. Fort Worth: Harcort, Brace & Jovanovich College Publishers.

Wolcott, H.F. (1995). Making a study "more ethnographic". In J. V. Maanen Ed., Representation in ethnography (pp.79-111). Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications.